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Vol. IV.—No. 142. MANCHESTER, Saturday, APRIL 29th. Price One Penny.

TEA.
THIS YEAR'S GROWTH,
VIA SUEZ CANAL,
AT
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LAST PERFORMANCES OF KENILWORTH.

MISS PLESSY MORDAUNT.
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MR. S. EMERY. MR. G. F. ROWE.

NEW AND ELABORATE SCENERY.
RICH AND COSTLY COSTUMES.
GORGEOUS ARMOUR, DECORATIONS, and APPOINTMENTS.

This (FRIDAY) Evening, at Half-past Seven o'clock,
And To-morrow, SATURDAY,
The Grand Historical Drama from SIR WALTER SCOTT'S

KENILWORTH.

ACT I.

Interior of the "Bonny Black Bear Inn."
(W. TELBIN.)
GLEE....."Of all the birds in bush or tree."
The adventurer and the moody cavalier.—Reminiscences of old friends. The wager and the expedition.

GARDEN FRONT OF CUMNOR MANOR HOUSE.
(MUIR.)
Approach of the intruders.

THE OLD HALL IN CUMNOR MANOR HOUSE.
(BICKERSTAFF.)
Tressilian and his lost love.

View in the Grounds of the Manor House.
(BICKERSTAFF.)
Varney and Tressilian meet.—The encounter!

AMY'S BOUDOIR IN CUMNOR!
(CRAVEN.)
Varney's counsel.—The Great Earl of Leicester and his Countess.

ACT II.

THE QUEEN'S APARTMENTS IN WOODSTOCK.
(HICKS.)
ELIZABETH AND HER COURT.—THE RIVAL EARLS.
Varney succeeds as a courtier.

GARDEN FRONT OF CUMNOR MANOR HOUSE.
(MUIR.)
The Waiting Maid and the Pedlar.

AMY'S BOUDOIR.
(CRAVEN.)
The Countess's Scorn!—The Drug!—The Escape!

ACT III.

A VIEW NEAR KENILWORTH.
(MUIR.)
The Cornish Gentleman and the Court Butterflies.

ROOM IN THE CASTLE OF KENILWORTH.
(BREW.)
Amy's request, and Tressilian's promise.

The Garden at Kenilworth.
(MUIR.)
GRAND ENTRY OF QUEEN ELIZABETH,
ATTENDED BY HER GUARDS AND TRAIN.
The New Knights.

THE REVELS.
GLEE..... ....."The Red Cross Knight."

THE MUMMERS OF COVENTRY.

PAGEANT of the AMAZONIAN COHORT,
BY 100 LADIES IN SILVER ARMOUR.
Amazonian Chief .....Miss EVAH HAMILTON.

ILLUMINATION OF THE CASTLE AND GARDENS.

GRAND TABLEAU,
COMPRISING UPWARDS OF 200 PERFORMERS.

ACT IV.

GARDENS OF KENILWORTH.
(W. GLOVER.)
The Lamb and the Lioness.—Wrath of the Queen and Peril of the Countess.—Leicester assents to her Murder.—The Duel.—The Repentance.—The Queen's resolve!

LANE NEAR CUMNOR MANOR HOUSE.
(W. TELBIN.)
The insolent Adventurer and his ruthless Employer.—Death of Miss Lambourne.

SAFETY CHAMBER AT CUMNOR.
(MUIR.)
How the trap was laid for the innocent, and how the bolt was drawn to the discomfiture of the wicked.

Stage Manager .. Mr. Burkinshaw. | **Musical Director** .. Mr. E. Audibert.
Private Boxes, £1. 1s.; £1. 11s. 6d.; and £2. 2s.
Lower Circle Stalls, 4s.; Orchestra Chairs, 3s.; Upper Circle, 2s.; Pit, 1s.; Galleries, 6d.

NOTICE.

Morning Performance of Kenilworth
SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH,
Commencing at Two o'clock.

MR. J. L. TOOLE,
On MONDAY NEXT, May 1st, in Byron's New Drama,
WAIT AND HOPE.
Prices as usual. Box-office open daily from Eleven till Ten.

Fragrant Tooth Wash,—FLUODENTINE, or Liquid Dentifrice. See Dr. Hassall's Report and Medical Testimony. INVALUABLE TO SMOKERS. Sold by all Chemists at 1s. 6d., 3s., and 5s. a Bottle.—*Prepared at* HAMPTON'S *PHARMACY, 63, Piccadilly.*

HULME'S CHARITY.

II.—Its Later History.

IN our previous notice of this charity we had discovered that the small grain of mustard seed sown by the good William Hulme in the year 1691, had, in the year 1827, become a mighty tree, in the branches of which fifteen reverend gentlemen were lodged, and that, in addition to this, nearly fifty thousand golden sovereigns had accumulated under its shelter. In the latter year, the trustees, after doing their work with fifteen exhibitioners and the Divinity Lecturer, had still £42,203 in hand, which began to burn their pockets. For the fourth time, therefore, they hied to Parliament, to whom they represented the perplexity in which they found themselves. Whether, when Parliament was applied to in this fashion, any hon. gentleman ever took the trouble of reading the will of Mr. Hulme, or of informing himself in the least what it was all about, is more than doubtful. The result would seem to show that the Act was passed by the raising of a hat and a notch of Mr. Speaker's pencil, and that the enlightened wisdom of Parliament was only nominally brought to bear upon it. The trustees had previously had the intention of providing lodgings in Oxford for their exhibitioners; this idea, however, for some reason or other, was abandoned. But their minds having once been diverted from persons to things, the trustees seem to have fancied that the only outlet for the surplus funds of the charity would be in the purchase of advowsons of livings, "or other ecclesiastical benefices," and in the erection of parsonage-houses and outbuildings. One is almost sorry that private vaults in sequestered churchyards for the members of Parliament who could sanction such a proceeding were not provided out of the charity, which in this instance surely has been long suffering.

The trustees again got what they wanted from Parliament, and who can blame them? They acted according to their education and their surroundings, and no one accuses them—certainly not we—of anything like bad faith. They might have permitted the affairs of the charity to slumber, and its funds to accumulate, as many other trustees have done. Clearly they were not lazy trustees. They went to work according to their lights, and, having once got off the line of Mr. Hulme's intention, they headed towards the ecclesiastical quarter, and thither all their proceedings have tended ever since. We read in the act of 1827: "That the said trustees did not then consider it advisable either to augment the then present number of exhibitioners . . . or to increase the yearly allowance which was then paid to each exhibitioner" (do we get here a peep of the proverb, *qui s'excuse, s'accuse?*), therefore they flew to advowsons and parsonages for relief. Why they did not consider it advisable to augment the number of the exhibitioners is not stated, nor is there a scintilla of reason given in any document we have seen for this resolution, so that we must be content with the fact as it stands. Possibly, having gone up from four to fifteen, the trustees deemed the latter a golden number, beyond which gilding could not go. It was assumed that Mr. Hulme—had he been alive—would inevitably have stopped at fifteen, and have then slanted off obliquely into advowsons, parsonages, and outbuildings! This resort to property of the kind indicates the leanings of the trustees towards the clerical side of the question, and a determination to fasten this idea on to the charity; because, as these advowsons were for the exhibitioners, and for them only, the latter would not have been wise in their generation had they not gone in for holy orders, into which they were *quasi* forced. Can it be pretended that this was an unbiased interpretation of the will of the founder? Suppose Mr. Hulme had clearly laid it down that, of the four original poor scholars, one was to be parson, one lawyer, one doctor of medicine, and one soldier—in that case, according to the dealings of these trustees, the parson would have had a parsonage, the lawyer a practice, the doctor a practice and a residence, and the soldier a commission, all bought for them out of the funds of the charity. Even supposing Mr. Hulme left his money, not for four poor scholars, but for four or more *ecclesiastical* scholars for four years, how can it be pretended that building parsonages in which the scholars shall be housed for an indefinite period is a fit fulfilment of his desires? If even these advowsons, or glebes, or buildings, could in any sense be called aids to the spread of education we might relent a little in our criticisms, but no one acquainted with the character of such property can pretend that scholarly attainments are specially furthered by such means.

The last parliamentary Act of all which ends this strange eventful history of the Hulme Charity was the Act of 1839. In the recital of this Act we meet again with the old story of the difficulty of getting lodgings for the Exhibitioners whilst they were students at Oxford. Lodgings for them after they had been forced into holy orders were easy enough by the simple process of building them. As laymen they were houseless—as clergymen they were found to be of more value than many sparrows. Again we are told, in the same recital, of the undesirability of augmenting the number of exhibitioners; but again we have no reasons assigned for this resolve, and still again we perceive the trustees spreading their pinions for a further flight into realms ecclesiastical. Hitherto they had simply been in ordinary good spirits amidst their bricks and mortar, in residences and so on for their exhibitioners. But in this, the last Act, they began to rollick and frisk and ultimately they jumped gaily into the vortex of *Church Building*. They now got powers "to endow or to augment the endowment of any benefice purchased by them" restricting only the expenditure in any one case to the modest sum of £7,000! Clause No. 3 of this Act, according to Mr. Kay, reads as follows (let us mark, learn, and inwardly digest this astounding clause)—*Empowers the Trustees to expend such sums as they shall think fit in building, endowing, and providing a fund for repairing Churches or Chapels under the Church Building Acts.*

Since 1839 no further changes have occurred in the disposition of the charity, but had there been no public commotion it is possible that we might have witnessed further flights of fancy on the part of the trustees; and who knows whether the moneys of Mr. Hulme might not have risen to the high level of a bishopric?

The bequest to the "poor sort of Bachelors of Arts" of the year 1691 has been Darwinially developed in this wise. The starting post has been changed from B.A.'s to undergraduates (we say nothing about the increase of numbers of the scholars or the increase of the pay, because generically this appears germane to the will of William Hulme). A Divinity lecturer, price 100 guineas per annum, has come out of the income of the poor scholars just to give the primal tinge to the future picture. Then, leaving persons, we come to properties, and, firstly, *advowsons* are projected, then *parsonages*, and, lastly, *churches*. The enquiring mind peers into the cloudland of conjecture for a solution of this problem—how it should be that scholars should develop into churches and nothing else? Our experience does not compel us to perceive that churches and pulpits are the

surest places to find scholars, or that churches and pulpits are the most certain areas for the exhibition of mental culture in its widest sense. Consequently, we ask how an educational bequest, pure and simple—as we must again insist that this bequest of William Hulme's was—should have got into this particular groove? If advowsons, benefices, endowments, and church buildings were essentials to the due fulfilment of Mr. Hulme's intentions, why did the trustees not start with them the moment the four first recipients of the charity were well provided for? What magic is there in the figures of fifteen that should arrest the *personal* adaptation of this charity, and then and then only force the trustees on to glebes and the like? Surely this is not an unreasonable question. The trustees did not slide off on to the Divinity Lecturer until the year 1814, and they did not expand into church building until the year 1839. Are we then to understand that for a quarter of a century they carelessly neglected the clear injunctions of the testator? Do you pull out the intentions of a dead man like a marine telescope? If you do, will it be impertinent to ask how much there is still left at the base of the instrument?

However, as we have already said, we have no desire to bear hardly upon the present trustees, whoever they may be, and we consider that Sir Joseph Heron only displayed his usual tact in addressing the meeting at the Town Hall in the same sense. It is not in the County of Lancaster, at all events, that it will be necessary to bear testimony to the high character of one of the trustees—we mean Colonel Wilson Patten—whose name throughout all England is a guarantee for steadfast integrity and unsullied honour. To him, at least, we look for a fair and equitable consideration of the present position of this charity, and we know that we shall not look in vain. Indeed, we shall be very much mistaken if, when the present conservators of these large funds are appealed to in a wise and conciliatory spirit, they do not respond in a similar spirit, and try to execute justice and maintain truth. The period is approaching when the resources of this trust will be largely augmented by circumstances with the recital of which we do not burden this paper, and we hope the trustees will see in those circumstances a means of redressing somewhat the inadvertent injustice of the past by a wise and large and liberal dispensation in the future. Whatever of malversation there may have been in the past history of Hulme's bequest does not lie alone at the door of the trustees. The public who, through their representatives in Parliament, have sanctioned the disposition of the charity so far, must also assume their share of the transaction. Precisely for this reason it is our duty even were it not our inclination to avoid any stone-throwing now. Above all things let us not import into the discussion the evil elements of sectarian feeling. We have no animus against this charity as having gone towards the sustenation of Churchmen as contra-distinguished from Dissenters. William Hulme was a Churchman, and undoubtedly he wanted by this bequest to benefit the children of his own faith; however, whether he did or not, the B.A. degree of Brazenose settled that definitively. But the children of his own faith lie quite outside the ecclesiastical profession, and ought not to have been mainly tied as regards this charity to that profession. That is our contention, and for the present we care not to go further.

If our contention be a valid one, then of necessity the advowsons, and the parsonages, and the building of churches go by the board, as they not only emphasize and make permanent the original blunder, but they divert into an ecclesiastical channel the stream which was intended to irrigate a much wider field. The most acrid Nonconformist would not wish to argue that there was anything affirmatively deleterious either in the establishment of a Divinity Lectureship, or in the purchase of advowsons, or the building and endowment of churches; but he may fairly argue that, reading Mr. Hulme's will, he cannot detect the warrant for any of these arrangements therein, and that, consequently, he ought not to be called a despoiler of church property when he protests against any further steps in the same direction. We should be disinclined to refer the settlement of this matter either to Churchmen or Dissenters as such. We appeal to an ampler constituency; a constituency which, not excluding either the one or the other, regards the question of national education as a grand aid to the promotion of that Faith, which, notwithstanding our many differences, is still dear to us all.

J.F.T.

THE SPHINX'S BUDGET.

MR. LOWE'S Budget has not been received with general favour. This is scarcely to be wondered at considering that he wanted more revenue and asked for increased taxes. As our Licensing Bill, which we last week brought before our readers, was received with so much favour by a discriminating and discerning public in general, and publicans in particular, we now furnish them with our own original budget, which like Aaron's rod will, we anticipate, swallow up the rods and serpents of that ingenious sorcerer and magician, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

1.—A tax of twenty shillings per lb., avoirdupois weight, shall be levied upon all tax collectors. We expect that this tax will become highly popular, and strike at the very root of taxation. Besides it will be a healthy measure for the tax-collectors, as it will induce them to take active exercise to keep down their weight.

2.—The malt tax will be entirely abolished. By this means every householder will be enabled to brew his own beer and have the privilege of sitting on his own cask and beer-barrel.

3.—Lucifers and other matches will remain untaxed, excepting aristocratic pigeon shooting matches, attended by fashionable and soiled doves to witness the slaughter of their fellow-creatures. On all such matches a heavy impost will be placed.

4.—The game license and gun tax will be extended to the consumption of Welsh rabbits; but, in consideration of certain vested interests and previous good character, an exemption will be made in favour of the landlord of the Crown Inn, Booth Street.

5.—Licenses of half-a-crown a head must be taken out for all domestic cats. These licenses will be issued in the same way as the present dog certificates. Kittens under six weeks of age will be exempt from the impost. Manx cats, owing to their cur-tail-ment, will only be charged two shillings each. It is calculated that this tax will produce about ten millions sterling a year, and will pave the way for the total abolition of the income tax.

6.—Pending the complete and final abolition of the income tax, all persons in receipt of £2 a week or more, in weekly wages, must give a ninepenny stamped receipt each week for their wage. This will put them upon something like the same level as clerks, salesmen, professional men, and other poor devils who already pay income tax on small incomes, while mechanics and other operatives get off scot free.

7.—The Bishop of Manchester will continue to tax himself with very hard work. In consideration, however, of his very large consumption of shoe-leather, a free pass on all railways throughout his diocese will be granted to him.

8.—A tax of one penny a line will be levied upon Mr. W. T. Charley, M.P., and Dr. John Watts for every letter which they write to the newspapers.

9.—Taxes will be levied upon all church bells within the boundaries of this city; also upon all American devils, railway steam whistles, German brass bands, barrel organs, and imitation bird calls.

10.—A twopenny stamp must be affixed to each copy of the *Illustrated Police News* and *The Day's Doings*.

11.—Town Councillors making speeches over ten minutes in length and street newsboys will be required to take out licenses, the amount in value to be fixed by the various municipalities.

12.—Inveterate punsters will be required to take out certificates. The charge, however, will be remitted on the production of a really new and good joke.

13.—All steel pen boxes containing 100 pens, and tin cases containing sardines, must bear the government halfpenny stamp. Boxes on the

BRITISH MUSEUM

ear, bestowed upon refractory children under the control of the School Boards, will be allowed to pass with impunity; but husbands boxing their wives' ears, and wives bestowing similar favours on their husbands, will be stamped with infamy. Navigators and mariners may box the compass as usual; and Messrs. Buckstone and Compton continue to perform *Box and Cox* as soon as the latter comedian returns to the Haymarket Theatre, and is not compelled merely to play the audience in and out. No duties will be levied on boxing matches, but the Salford police will be held responsible for pugilistic encounters in the public streets. Cottage gardens with box borders will be exempt from duty, and Christmas boxes will be entirely abolished.

14.—A penny stamp must be affixed to every case containing one hundred churchwardens. We mean the pipes, not the men. (This is quite as good a joke as Mr. Lowe's about the matrimonial matches, and quite as brittle as the other measure was combustible.) In this case it will not be more difficult to evade the law than with the famous match boxes.

15.—*Ad valorem* duties will be imposed upon chignons, hair dyes, rouge, hair powder, and sundry fictitious female excrescences exceeding a certain size.

16.—Mr. Darwin, author of *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, will be taxed to produce a taxidermatist specimen of the original jelly-fish.

17.—The ingenuity of the Right Hons. Robert Lowe, M.P., and H. Austin Bruce, M.P., will be taxed to produce Budgets and Licensing Bills equal to ours.

18.—The statesman who compiled this Budget will be taxed with the authorship of it.

A "CAVENDISH" TEA MEETING.

A PAPER published in this journal a few weeks ago under the title of "A Roby Tea Meeting," although written in a perfectly truthful and certainly not inimical spirit, drew forth some strictures upon us from certain persons directly or indirectly interested. These took the form of letters to the Editor and spoken comments in the pulpit and elsewhere. Some of the strictures emanated from individuals to whom we had found it desirable to administer a mild reproof. Philanthropists are but human, and to see ourselves as others see us is not always an agreeable treat. Truth is not uniformly palatable even to the professed servants of truth. On the other hand, we are not strangers to the fact that many religious bodies, doing a public work and appealing for public support, loudly, yet vainly, imagine they have the right to deprecate criticism by secluding their business meetings behind the veil of an assumed privacy. That such organizations have such a right will not, of course, be admitted by any impartial mind. That they should claim it is suspicious. Fresh air and light are generally considered to be healthful accessories to the lives of most organisms. To us it seems just possible that if a few more breezes from the outside world searched through those lungs of religious societies known as tea-parties, the latter might perhaps become the organs of more vigorous systems.

But whatever may be said of the rest of the religious world, the authorities of Cavendish Street Chapel, unlike their more timid brethren, appear to court publicity. It was a series of advertisements, evidently saying to all who chose to read them, "Come," which attracted us to its school-room the other evening. From those advertisements we gathered that the meeting was an annual one, designed to celebrate the conclusion of the financial year of the Day and Sunday Schools. The advertisements concluded with a sort of bait, in the shape of an announcement that the Rev. A. J. Bray, the "minister-elect," would be present on the occasion. Cavendish Street Chapel holds so prominent a place among Nonconformists, that its future minister was sure to be an object of considerable interest to Dissenters; and on entering the school-room we were not surprised to find a tolerably large assembly of people. Taking a seat, we were shortly supplied with tea, while our cup was surrounded with plates containing supplies of biscuits, currant-bread, a compound known as "seed-bread," and some plain bread and butter. The common people, like ourselves, were seated at long tables, extending from end to end of the room. In the centre was a platform, and on this platform was a short table, about three yards in length, at which sat half a dozen people. They also were taking tea. We had not been seated long before the new minister descended from his elevated position, and made a tour through the room. Of course nearly all eyes were fixed upon him, the ladies' admiringly. When he had passed by us we were interested by the various comments. "He looks young," said an elderly party opposite. "Delicate," added a young lady farther away. "Not short of confidence," muttered a middle-aged man, with a face like Captain Cuttle's. To which a business-man added, "There's no getting on without it."

The entertainment after tea reminded us, in several particulars, of our friend Mr. Maccabe. To begin with, when the opening hymn had been sung and every body was quiet, the organ had evidently "a few of the notes left in." Several of the earlier speeches, too, had that rotatory character which usually distinguishes addresses delivered "on this occasion." The opening speech of the chairman, Mr. Sidebottom, was rather difficult to follow through its various evolutions, but we gathered that he was of opinion that the entrance, under the new school-board regulations, of a number of street arabs into the Cavendish Day Schools would be followed by an exodus of the present pupils. Not at all unlikely, thought we. Mr. J. F. Roberts, one of the city councillors, was, as he always is, intensely practical. An elderly gentleman, to whom the various incidents of the school examination, held a few nights previously, had recalled the days of his youth, told us several anecdotes of that happy period. He had hit, too, upon a novel method of rewarding youthful merit. He had been so pleased with the way in which one of the girls "said a piece," that he had positively sent her his portrait. We wondered whether the sending of portraits to young ladies was also one of the practices of his youth. It is pleasant to see a juvenile heart in an aged body, but we live in a mercenary age, and we fancy the youthful pupil would have appreciated some other gift more highly. Another gentleman, who experienced some slight difficulty with the beginning of his speech, asked for a glass of water, and remarked that anyone who addressed Cavendish Chapel always required plenty of that liquid. Considering the state of the weather, if our friend had gone out and addressed the chapel, he would have had no reason to complain of a deficient supply. Water seemed to have remarkable properties in his case, however, for, after drinking, the orator went ahead, vulgarly speaking, "like a house on fire." As is usual, the stock joke was about a woman. Any reference to a person spoken of as Mr. Bray's "better-half," or "intended better-half," elicited roars of laughter. The allusion was made so frequently that we felt a most intense interest in the lady before the proceedings terminated.

But although a proper number of resolutions was formally moved, seconded, and passed, one or two reports and financial statements read, and certain speeches made on the subject of education—of which speeches we have recorded above all that we remember—the event of the evening to which all eagerly looked forward was the address of the "minister-elect." When at length the wished-for moment arrived the Chairman introduced the reverend gentleman by means of a little speech, in which he told us how Mr. Bray had prayed and looked when the appointment was offered to him. Mr. Sidebottom's remarks, we venture to think, were not in good taste. They must most assuredly have been extremely embarrassing to Mr. Bray. Is this conning and scrutiny, we wonder, and this subsequent public narrative of the result, the customary ordeal to which young pastors are subjected? The description was at least an injustice to Mr. Bray, inasmuch as it made probably perfectly natural actions on his part resemble what we believe Mr. Ruskin terms "pantomimic religion." When Mr. Bray rose to address the meeting he was greeted with enthusiastic applause. The people of Cavendish Chapel certainly know how to welcome heartily. Such a reception as that given to the young parson could only emanate from hearty people, and was enough surely to make the object of it feel warmly towards his welcomers. Considering the apparent youthfulness of the speaker, we were not surprised to find his speech somewhat expressive of a gratifying ardour and frankness. It occurred to us that he might be sincere We mentally speculated at the same time how much snubbing he would receive from his brother parsons, how long his good intentions would last, and how soon his deacons would spoil him. The speech, which was a most interesting one, had three chief points. It touched first upon the sense of responsibility under which the speaker laboured. When one thinks of all that a man may or may not do, good or bad, in that pulpit and amidst its dependencies, it seemed to us calculated to give a thoughtful man pause. For our own part, we wondered how

much religious reality will be aided in our midst by this latest addition to its expounders. The next point was an avowed intention to be indefatigable in Sunday-school work. This avowal drew another round of applause from the listeners. Mr. Bray lastly expressed a willingness to listen to criticism. That sounded like the confidence of honesty.

The best speech of the evening was delivered by a young man who succeeded Mr. Bray. We could not make out whether he was an elder scholar or a Sunday-school teacher, but he seemed to us to talk about what he had thought of and understood—Sunday-school work. The speech was admirably expressed, and adorned with metaphors and illustrations of singular felicity. It treated of the undeniable fact that the majority of Sunday-school teachers are more fit to be taught than to teach, and that, for some unexplained reason, an educated and well-read class of instructors is not to be laid fast hold of. It pointed out also the necessity for a higher standard of Sunday-school effort, if Sunday-schools are to continue to exist when the results of the Education Act are beginning to be reaped. Altogether, this address, manly, forcible, and intelligent, was a pleasant relief, and compared favourably with the namby-pamby sentiment and wearisome frivolity which too often marks the gatherings known as tea-parties, and which was not wholly absent from the Cavendish meeting of last week.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

THE Prince's Theatre, on Monday night, ventured on the hazardous experiment of producing *As You Like It*—a play intimately associated in the minds of Manchester playgoers, with the splendid version of it given by the Haymarket company. It was, of course, inevitable that so high a standard could not be attained, but clean, bright, sylvan scenery, artistic groupings, and a general picturesqueness in the style in which the piece was mounted, made the difference far less noticeable than it might have been. It is quite cheerful to have a theatre in Manchester which can always be depended upon for pleasant scenery and good stage management, however short may be the run of the piece produced. Much of the scenery on Monday night could not possibly have been better, if it had been painted specially.

But where this theatre misses the effect it should, and we feel certain might produce, is in its stock performers. We are surprised that a management so thoroughgoing in all other departments should have rested satisfied for so long a time with such a company as it possesses. There is the nucleus of a very good staff in the theatre—for instance, Mr. Wainwright, Mr. Warde, and several others—and it is the greatest pity in the world that tolerable actors are not found to back them up. The theatre is especially in lack of two or three good-looking useful actresses. Now, these abound in Liverpool: why shouldn't they in Manchester? The best day's work the Prince's theatre ever did—and it has done many a good day's work—would be the permanent engagement of a competent young lady, with a good face, voice, and figure, to play satisfactory seconds to the stars who visit us. Miss Bickerstaff played Celia very fairly, but seemed much too inexperienced, insignificant, and timid for so prominent a part. Mr. Warde quite justified our good opinion of him by the way in which he did his best to sustain the sympathy of the audience with Orlando—no light task, when the relations of the sexes are reversed, as in the case of Rosalind and him. Mr. Chapman very creditably played Old Adam, so associated in one's mind with Mr. Chippendale's fine portrait. Mr. Chapman seems to have a gift, not common to all the members of the Prince's company, namely, some idea of elocution. His performance would be better if he shook and doddered rather less. And Mr. Jones, as Charles the wrestler, charmed us by artistically piling on the H's in the style of Lady Logwood: a sarcasm upon professors of "the noble art" which much delighted us.

The gem of the performance was, as might have been foretold, the matchless Touchstone of Mr. Compton. Surely humour never was so dry, or actor better fitted by his part. The title of Shakesperian Jester, assumed by Mr. Wallett of the circus, might with truth be worn by Mr. Compton, had he not that genius which requires no self-assertion. He was greeted as true talent always is in Manchester.

Mr. Vandenhoff's impersonation of the melancholy Jaques is so original that we hardly know yet whether we altogether like it. It is very good, but somehow it seems more a student's rendering than an actor's. We incline to think that much of its amateurish seeming is to be attributed to the too modern style of whisker that he wore. He looked too like a gentleman masquerading. Manchester must have an opportunity of seeing Mr. Vandenhoff again in other parts.

Miss Neilson—the Miss Neilson who has probably been photographed more perseveringly than any other human being, and with whose handsome face, black eyes and hair, all England is familiar—made her first appearance at this theatre, and underwent the most trying ordeal she has ever had to go through. The result is what we had anticipated. The verdict is, Miss Neilson is a winning and attractive actress, but her acting is not equal to her reputation. The renown with which she comes to us is enormous, and it is a puzzle how it has been gained. It has been principally gained in tragedy, and in tragedy no doubt her strength lies. It does not in comedy; at any rate, not in Rosalind. There are innumerable good points about her Rosalind, betokening natural aptitude and careful study. Her gestures and her poses are beyond reproach, but there is too much pose and gesture in her conception of the part. Nothing could be daintier than her appearance in doublet and hose, but she wears them like a timid modest girl, instead of with that glorious assurance which distinguishes Miss Robertson's superb impersonation of the part. She altogether lacks that dash and go which carries the impossible deception through, and without which no Rosalind is Rosalind at all. The Rosalind that Shakespere drew was beyond doubt a girl of her period, and as such she must be represented. We observed the minor merits of Miss Neilson's acting—the artistic touches thrown in here and there—such as the weary walk along the flat and then the tired half run half tumble down the hillock, on her entrance into the forest; but the vigour of the character was not grasped, or, at least, was not portrayed. Miss Neilson is not physically competent to play the part of Rosalind; she has not the high animal spirits that spring from a strong frame. But we can hardly doubt that the same glaring faults which mark her playing of it must mark all her acting; the set stagey smile—the writhing mouth—and, most of all, those coarse uneducated tones of voice and of pronunciation into which she lapses every now and then, which send a shudder through the frame. One might imagine, sometimes, one was listening to a Sunday scholar rather than an educated actress. Surely, these faults might be remedied. Miss Neilson surely need not talk about her "fāhther" any more. Such flaws are ruinous to her acting.

It is not a pleasant duty to thus criticize a prepossessing and renowned young lady; but we strongly feel that the materials of a good actress are being spoilt by being over-praised. There is much allowance to be made for Miss Neilson. She has never yet had the advantage of being honestly criticized. It would have done her a world of good if she had paid this town a visit sooner. She received a number of bouquets upon the first night, and was warmly greeted—as indeed her talents merited—but the general feeling was a feeling of considerable disappointment.

We do hope Miss Neilson will be sensible enough to suffer and to profit by advice. Her faults are to be remedied; and though she will never make a satisfactory Rosalind, we hope to see her in some other parts in which we may speak of her in terms more consonant with her reputation and our own desires. She has a matchless stage appearance—witness her in Rosalind's bridal dress—considerable artistic instinct, and many winning ways. We should be glad to see her make the most of them.

TOWN TALK,
AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

THE VESTMENTS AT ST. ALBAN'S.

A CORRESPONDENT asks us to correct an error which, he says, occurred in our description of the Easter Day services at St. Alban's, Strangeways. Instead of "the clergy wore surplices lined with blue and gold," we ought, it seems, to have said they wore stoles. Ordinarily, our correspondent assures us, the misstatement would not have had any significance, "but, just now, whilst there is such a commotion about vestments, many have been led to believe that copes, or some other new vestment, had been adopted at St. Alban's, which is not the case."

SCOTT'S NOVELS ON THE STAGE.

Apropos of the production of *Kenilworth* at the Theatre Royal, it may not be uninteresting to note that many of Scott's novels had scarcely

found their way into the circulating libraries before they were seized upon by some theatrical hack and foisted by the managers upon the stage. *Kenilworth* was one of the earliest to be subjected to this ruthless treatment, a fate which it shared in common with *Woodstock*, *Peveril of the Peak*, *Guy Mannering* (dramatized under the name of *The Witch of Derncleugh*) *The Heart of Midlothian*, *Rob Roy*, together with many more which, in their theatrical form, are now happily forgotten. *Kenilworth* was first brought out, as a two act melodrama, in 1821, at Covent Garden, the chief characters being cast thus:—Leicester, Vandenhoff; Antony Foster, Farley; Queen Elizabeth, Mrs. Faucett; Amy Robsart, Miss Vining. It is described as a complete failure. A four-act version (probably the one on which the drama as now playing at the Theatre Royal in this city has been founded) was subsequently brought out at Drury Lane, and acted eight nights; and later in the season the same version was produced at Bath when the court was staying there. According to this cast Leicester was played by Wallack, Varney by Archer, Antony Foster by Terry, Queen Elizabeth by Mrs. Bunn, and Amy Robsart by Mrs. West. It seems probable that Terry himself was the author of this adaptation, as it was upon this occasion that we first hear of Scott's pun about going to the theatre to see himself Terry-fied. When the *Heart of Midlothian* was brought out at the Tottenham Street Theatre (Mrs. Fitzwilliam playing Madge Wildfire) a remarkable hit was made by an actor named Hamilton, who, in the character of Archibald, the Duke of Argyle's footman, was so good in dress, dialect, and acting, that the illusion was perfect. Though scarcely five minutes on the stage, he made so good use of his time that the recollection of his jointless and compass-like legs, his Caledonian reserve, his condescension to Mrs. Glass (my lord duke's snuff compounder in ordinary), and the superior manner of waving his hand, distracted the attention of the house from the remainder of the play. The best of the thing was that Hamilton had never been heard of as an actor before, and the house, whether prematurely or not, arriving at the conclusion that that was the only character he could possibly represent to perfection, determined that after the fashion of his immortal namesake he should be styled "single part Hamilton." In *Woodstock*, as brought out at Covent Garden, Cromwell was played by Ward, Charles by Kemble, Sir Henry Lee by Farren, Mark Everard by Cooper, and Alice Lee by Mrs. Chatterley.

THE OLD TRAFFORD OMNIBUSES.

We understand that the omnibus business carried on by Mr. Standring has been purchased by the Manchester Carriage Company, who are to assume the reins on Monday, May 1st.

LANCASHIRE WORTHIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—Allow me to correct an error into which the writer of the interesting memoir of Col. Drinkwater, contained in your last publication, has fallen. It was not the Colonel, but his son John Elliott, who was the author of *The Life of Kepler*, and the treatise on *Probabilities*, published by the Useful Knowledge Society. This son was a barrister, came the Northern Circuit twice or thrice; was fourth wrangler in Airy's year (1823), and afterwards became a legislative member of the Supreme Court of India. CANTAB.

April 24th.

FLOREAT HUGH MASON.

STILL in Excelsis. It is barely three months since we had occasion to notice the extraordinary high-pitched and jubilant notes of Mr. Hugh Mason and Mr. Alderman Bennett at the annual meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. On that occasion, the mild and pianissimo notes of Mr. Malcolm Ross, Mr. Edward Walmsley, of Stockport, and other members of the Chamber, were quite drowned by the triumphant blare of the ex-President and ex-Vice-President's trumpets. On Monday last, at the usual quarterly meeting, the musical overture was renewed by a full orchestra. In fact Bellini's grand opera of *Norma* was performed in excellent style. Mr. J. B. McKerrow appeared as the famous Druidical Priestess, and the much wronged Norma sang Casta Diva, and pitched into Mr. Hugh Mason with great effect. Mr. Hugh Mason appeared as the faithless Pollio, and Norma's jealousy and vengeance were terribly excited when she caught him flirting and singing in seductive and mellifluous tones with the Oldham factory operative in the guise of Adelgisa. Mr. Edmund Ashworth appeared as the high priest Oroveso, and his fine bass voice told with great effect in the concerted pieces. The chorus was made up of Messrs. R. Johnson, J. A. Bremner, John Mitchell, E. Walmsley, Zigomala, Whittaker, and others, but their voices were made discordant at times. Mr. P. B. Ferguson in particular sang terribly out of time and tune, but the whole performance was very enjoyable.

Since the last meeting, Mr. Edmund Ashworth, who was then President-elect, has declined the chairmanship, and Mr. Hugh Mason has been promoted to the Presidency. We congratulate him on his appointment, and are glad to see that his increased responsibilities have in no way damped his spirits. His friends and co-mates do not quite appear to share in his tremendous exuberance. Guide Bridge and Ashton-under-Lyne may be in Excelsis, but Oldham and Stockport sing *De profundis*. Mr. Hugh Mason is like a cork in a bucket of water; he never loses his bouyancy, and the more he is thrust under the surface, the faster does he bob up again. Mr. Edmund Ashworth, a primeval free-trader, declares that a Belgian manufacturer, with a moderately sized establishment, has "an advantage of £6,000 saved, before the Englishman begins to make any profit at all." Mr. Whittaker, of Royton, said that Mr. Hugh Mason "spoke at random, when he said that foreign competition was a myth. *He attributed the agitation in Oldham for 58 hours per week to expressions made use of by the chairman on that occasion.* He strongly deprecated these expressions." Mr. J. B. Mc.Kerrow said he "objected to any voluntary arrangement (with the operatives), and the large manufacturers, who first fell into the arrangement, if, indeed, they did not offer the concession, had incurred a grave responsibility. He thought their conduct was characterized by gross selfishness. To them—men of large realized wealth,—a concession of two hours per week was of little consequence; but it was of the utmost importance to a host of smaller manufacturers." To these and sundry other objurgatory groans and denunciations, Mr. Hugh Mason only replied by more ecstatic strains than ever. He reminds us of Keat's "Thing of beauty." To paraphrase the poet's lines—

> Mr. Hugh Mason is a joy for ever;
> His loveliness increases; he will never
> Pass into bankruptcy; but still will keep
> A column open for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams of wealth.

Mr. Hugh Mason ridicules and defies foreign competition, as Love laughs at locksmiths. As we pointed out in a former article, Mr. Hugh Mason has a special trade, and has frequently made money when other branches and the bulk of producers were sinking deeper and deeper into the slough of insolvency and ruin. Now, when trade has revived, partly owing to a fluke in the shape of the continental war, which knocked down the price of cotton effectually and at once, Mr. Hugh Mason, in his official capacity of President of the Chamber of Commerce, blazons it forth to the four quarters of the globe, that Lancashire is in a state of rampant prosperity, and literally coining money. We do not deny that cotton spinners are doing well, and manufacturers better than they did, but before sending up such a chorus of jubilation, let us consider what has taken place.

Why, an enormous proportion of spinners and manufacturers have compounded with their creditors, and, strictly speaking, their debts of the last few years ought to be wiped off before the entire trade of the district can properly be said to be in a sound state. One branch of the cotton trade flourishing at the expense of another branch, is by no means a subject for congratulation. How will it be should merchants begin to have a bad trade and lose heavily? Mr. Hugh Mason, save the mark, quotes from a former speech of Mr. Alderman Bennett, about the increase of mills, and goes into these eternal statistics about the number of bales of cotton consumed and yards of calico exported. Why, when imports and exports are sometimes at their extremest tension, trade is at bottom utterly unsound. Mr. Mason triumphantly points to the mills which are being built. We should first like to see the mortgages paid off the old ones. What about the operatives and their wages throughout the district? If the masters cave in at present, the demands of the "hands" will become more insatiable than ever. As Mr. Walmsley said, "mills were carried on by forced speculation." Of course they are, and when bad times come, what do they do? They smash, pay five or six shillings in the pound, and then go on again on a fictitious capital,

and wait for better times. In the meantime the unfortunate creditors look on and listen miserably to the transporting jubilations of the President of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Hugh Mason quotes statistics from Mr. John Platt, M.P., about the disadvantages which foreign manufacturers labour under in the price they pay for their machinery. Perhaps if Mr. Platt, M.P., and other machine makers were less liberal in the credit which they give to people who know nothing whatever of the business to enable them to go into the cotton trade it would be better for the manufacturing interest in general. We are extremely glad to see that the President of the Chamber of Commerce was sharply taken to task for his optimist views. When the next crisis comes, perhaps it will be found that the vast increase of new mills is not entirely a matter for congratulation. A failure of the cotton crop, or a collapse of credit, would soon reveal the nakedness of the land.

In the middle of the discussion on Monday, the irrepressible Mr. P. B. Ferguson enlivened the meeting by expatiating upon Mr. Lowe's scheme for taxing lucifer matches. He might just as appropriately have dilated upon the 2,000 Guineas Stakes to be run for on the following day.

Mr. Hugh Mason has been busy chaperoning and entertaining our Burmese visitors, and no doubt these dusky gentlemen enjoyed his hospitality and appreciated the arrangements and prosperity of the thriving Oxford Mills, at Ashton-under-Lyne. Individually, Mr. Mason has been and is very prosperous, but as regards the general trade of the district, we hope that when he next addresses the Chamber of Commerce, he will endeavour, as old Weller advised, to "dra' it mild, Samivel, dra' it mild."

A DRAMATIC CRITIC.

Manchester Guardian.

"AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN."

April 12th.	April 17th.
Byron's new play was produced at the Prince's Theatre on Monday evening. It is a new treatment of the favourite dramatic device about a forged will. The plot is not altogether probable. * * * * The play is * * * * without * such features as will secure for it a continuing popularity. It is neither better nor worse than the average modern drama.	To the merits of the piece in detail, to the subtle touches of humour and of pathos, we cannot attempt to do justice. What we have already said will be enough to induce those who really care for a good play to go while there is yet time, and judge for themselves. * * * When we add that the whole tone of the play is thoroughly pure and healthly, that from first to last there is not a word which need be objected to, we have said enough to show that the success which it seems destined to command will be thoroughly deserved.
MR. SOTHERN.	
Mr. Sothern * * * * * is more jerky and spasmodic in his delivery than we have noticed before; and this characteristic, which has no merit whatever in it, except—if that is a merit—of being a reminder of the one character in which Mr. Sothern has excelled, that of Lord Dundreary — this characteristic, we say, is a positive interference with the enjoyment of what otherwise would be a fairly-acted part.	Mr. Sothern, acting his best in a thoroughly congenial part, is irresistible. Again and again, by laughter and by applause, the audience has shown its hearty appreciation. Some may be inclined to complain that the new part is too much like the old ones with which they are already familiar,—that it has been obviously written to suit the actor, and thus serves merely to intensify a mannerism already somewhat marked. The public, however, has refused to be so critical, and the public in such matters is the final judge.
MR. EDMONDS.	
Mr. Edmunds * * * * * appears liable to make the mistake of attempting to imitate Mr. Toole.	Mr. Edmonds deserves great praise for his conscientious and spirited rendering of a somewhat hackneyed character.
MISS BARNES.	
Miss Barnes * * * must overcome the tendency to an angularity in the carriage of her head before she realizes all the grace she is capable of expressing.	The three ladies (*i.e.*, Misses Moore, Roselle, and Barnes) rival each other in grace.

[STUDIES IN NATURAL HISTORY.]

BISHOPS.

THE first one I ever saw was Dr. Ryder, Bishop of the then Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry. He was very well known and very popular in the county from which I come, not simply because he was himself a very amiable man, but also because—and this probably in the public eye at that time was the chief attraction—he happened to be brother of Lord Harrowby, and thus had dignity in the State as well as in the Church. The Hon. and Right Rev. Henry Ryder, Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, seemed to me, as a boy, such a tremendous mouthful in the county newspaper, that I was a little disappointed when I saw his lordship in the flesh, and yet I beheld the right reverend prelate to great advantage, for he was in full canonicals and wig, and was surrounded by a train of the beneficed clergy of the county, who treated their Diocesan with ceremonious politeness, the offspring not of servility but of respect. Boys have such curious notions about things which they have never seen that my disappointment at the sight of the Bishop was scarcely explicable and it very soon wore off; for I liked the looks of the man, whilst his wig struck awe into my heart. Bishops wore wigs in those days, and the first bishop to leave them off was Dr. Bloomfield, Bishop of London, who did so because he was as bald as a coot. Bishops, you see, have their whims just like you and I.

About this boyish period of my life I was placed socially midway between two opposing religious influences—in this wise. I had two grand-aunts, one very Churchy and the other very Dissenty. They were both extremely kind to me, and I could not detect in their sugar-plums any variation of flavour leading me to lean more to one side than the other. In fact, at the time I took no notice of the squabbles, never very serious, which they had over the question of my salvation. It was only afterwards that I remembered their provision in this respect, and some of the incidents thereof. To this very consecration at which I saw good Bishop Ryder, I was taken away early in the morning, and carted, so to speak, to that ceremony by the prelatical aunt, who made profound obeisance to his lordship as he passed down the aisle, and who also compressed me slowly at the nape of the neck that I might do likewise, which accordingly I did, hoping that the Bishop would not hit me on the head as being a young and inferior sort of sinner, given to eat green gooseberries and to hurl the unheeding stone *in partibus infidelium*. I was much pleased when the right reverend gentleman bowed and passed on, as much as to say—"I shall overlook it for the sake of your aunt." That dear old lady worshipped the bishop. He was Lord Harrowby's brother, and that was sufficient. Her own brother had held some situation on the Sandon estate, and in those days people stood by their territorial chief loyally, even when they were not obliged to do so. During our absence at the consecration, the other great-aunt knitted quietly at home, and forged argumentative pellets to put in the tea of "the prelatical" when we arrived at home. One of these pellets—the only one with which I shall trouble you—was that which controverted the then favourite dogma of the Apostolical Succession.

After all I had heard during the day it was quite a shock to me to perceive the other aunt take a piece of India rubber, as it were, and begin to rub out all the fair impressions of her sister. If I affirm that at that time it did not appear to me worth while disturbing the theory of the apostolical succession, it is only to have the opportunity of reaffirming that opinion now. I don't see that the Apostles can be prejudiced by it, whilst I can easily imagine the bare theory doing a deal of good. You will not expect so superficial an observer of men and manners as I, to inquire too curiously into the scholarly arguments by which this theory is ordinarily disputed. So many men have to form their opinions

without the lantern of patristic or Biblical lore as a guide for their erring footsteps that it would be unnatural if we had not a sort of rule of thumb, that is to say, a rough-and-tumble kind of key by which we may open this important casket, or fancy that we do so. For instance, I have always thought the variation in the worldly position of our bishops as against the Wondrous Fishers an argument of the weakest possible. The notion of Lord Harrowby's brother shrimping at Southport as a necessary preparation for the Episcopate always from the earliest days rung in my ears as nonsense, though not perhaps more ridiculous than the remark I heard made only the other evening at a dinner party, that it was out of character for the Deacon of a Dissenting Church to drive four-in-hand—a wealthy Dissenter having been detected tooling along that number of spanky bays in Piccadilly. Let us beware, my beloved brethren, of servile imitations, or we shall be getting into the condition of mind of Charles Lamb's Chinaman, who burnt down his house in order to roast a pig. Since the Acts of the Apostles the whole frame-work of society has been changed; but if it be given to men to convert sinners, they can do it now without let or hindrance, either from horses, or carriages, or mansions, or titles; more they could not do, even if they caught caller-herring and sent their bonnie wives to dispense them up Leith Walk.

I have watched with considerable interest some recent attempts at hack imitations of the exterior humbleness of the first apostles, and I confess they have created in my mind lamentation and mourning and woe. No doubt "Happy Sam," and Beaver, the converted prize-fighter, and other crude developments of the Darwinian theory, having heard that the primitive simplicity of the earlier preachers of Christianity was fast disappearing, have got it into their heads that they will put things straight, just to correct the morbid acidity of the spiritual peers upon the stomach of religious England. I wish the Dissenting Deacon would drive four-in-hand over all these wretched imitations. I am not prepared to say that bishops are not artificial to some extent, but if they be, they possess this attribute in common with many men who are too prone to make it out that bishops have a monopoly thereof, and who denounce them accordingly. There are subtle social influences which affect us all, and not simply Churchmen and bishops. The Dissenter of to-day is as unlike the Dissenter of John Bunyan's days as the Primate of all England is to the fishers of Galilee. The unlikeness in both cases, let us hope, is more seeming than anything else, setting aside as we are bound to do the superhuman advantages of the Galilean preachers. Why is it pretended that wealth and station should corrupt the clergy and the bishops, and yet leave the laity unscathed? If by boiling fat, and manufacturing soap, and amassing property I rise in the world, and paint rampant heraldic beasts on my coach-panels, can I therefore not henceforth possess my soul in peace and sing the hymns of Watts and harmoniously twang the harp with Burder? If by wasting the midnight oil and not manufacturing soap, but grinding gerunds and wrestling with mighty Grecians and preaching Bamptonian lectures, I ascend the chair of St. Augustin and have precedence next to the Princes of the Blood Royal, must my soul henceforth be sordid, and my love for the great Christian Verities be for ever dispelled?

I think that bishops are not more artificial than lay peers or high sheriffs; and for this reason, and some others, I am surprised at the great desire shown now by advanced politicians to get the bishops out of the House of Lords. Curious enough is it to see the opponents of hereditary legislation desiring the abolition of the only element which is not hereditary in that House. The bishops, I contend, are a standing protest in the House itself against the general character of its composition. They embody the principle of selection, and if you wish the Upper House to be succeeded by an assembly of notables—not hereditary—the Episcopal Bench is the only part of the present arrangement which you could not fairly touch at all. But I am told they represent the Church. And why not the Church, when the army, the navy, the law, the plutocracy are all represented there, and represented permanently, no man being able to say what sort of Darwinians will succeed them in the line of descent, whilst amongst the Bishops, at all events you are pretty safe against idiots, lunatics, horse copers, and lawyers, whose word no man relies on? By all means let us have an assembly of notables, for hereditary representation is unfitted for the genius of a free people; but an assembly of notables must include ecclesiastics, not necessarily churchmen, of course, and not necessarily gentlemen who would marry their deceased wife's sister. An assembly of notables ought to include specimens of the Clergy of all Denominations, Dr. Tait as well as Dr. Parker, Dr. Thomson as well as Dr. Waddy and Dr. Manning; but I think I should draw the line a little above "Happy Sam" and Mr. Beaver, the converted pugilist.

DE PROFUNDIS.

A VISIT TO THREE RAGGED SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—I send you the following account of visits paid to three Ragged Schools during the past winter, and hope that it may prove interesting to some of your readers who are unacquainted with a work which is being carried on quietly and almost unnoticed from year to year.

I had given much thought and attention to Sunday Schools, when it occurred to me that they do not altogether reach the children which are most in need of their assistance; and, being aware of the great amount of crime and misery existing on every side, I determined to get at least a sight of the great, or rather small, unwashed. How to set about this rather puzzled me at first, but I fortunately named the matter to a gentleman of my acquaintance whom I found able and willing to give me the required information. He taught in a Ragged School two or three nights a week, and had also a class in a Sunday School, morning and afternoon. Having easily obtained his consent to accompany him on the following Sunday evening, we set out.

Five minutes to six, p.m., found us before the door of a very ordinary-looking building in a back street in Ancoats, from which a loud noise of voices and slattering feet proceeded. We ascended a narrow staircase, and reached a room about seventeen yards long, and three or four yards in breadth. Before the evening was over this small room to see contained about 150 boys, girls, and infants. I had been accustomed a large number of children together, but had never witnessed such a sight as was now before me. They were the veritable street Arabs, with a sprinkling of boys who worked in the surrounding mills. As we entered some fine fun was going on, in the way of miniature pugilistic displays, plugging of hair, and the like. They were so wild that one might readily have thought them to be a totally different race from some boys which I had seen in a middle-class Sunday School a short time before. The noise was deafening, and the smell something to be remembered. However, six o'clock came, and the bell having commanded silence, a hymn was sung, a prayer offered up imploring the blessing of Almighty God on the night's work, and the teachers began the arduous task of instructing their unpromising pupils. I, being a stranger, was asked to take a few of the *best* boys, and even with these I found enough to do. They were bright-eyed, sharp-looking little fellows, with an amount of boldness and humour about them not generally found amongst children of the middle class. After a time the bell was once more sounded, and another hymn was sung. A teacher mounted a sort of pulpit and addressed the children in plain, simple language, with an occasional anecdote, in order to keep their attention. After another prayer and hymn the children were sent away, and we took our departure.

As we returned I felt more than ever convinced that those were the children for whom our Sunday Schools were mostly required, and was

much interested with the account I heard from my companion. They had not been at work so very long, yet he quoted an instance of good which he had been the means of accomplishing. They were unfortunately short of room and of teachers. These two evils told sadly against the order and efficiency of the school. Still they had evening classes during the week for reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as a sewing class for girls. A penny bank was an inducement for them to save money to buy themselves clothes, and so forth. A young lady conducts a Men's Class, which is held weekly. The class was formerly a large one, but sickness had compelled the young lady to absent herself, and the numbers had consequently diminished. She had done much towards lessening the misery of more than one (this we heard from another source), and as she was about to resume her work her class would no doubt soon be recruited. He hoped to have a larger room in time, when they would be able to accommodate many more children who at present are left out in the streets exposed to the evil effects of bad companionship.

So much for my first visit to a Ragged School. The next one we visited, on the following Sunday, was held over some shops in Old Garrett. As we approached it I was reminded of the difficulties with which Ragged Schools were formerly surrounded by seeing a policeman at the door, my companion telling me that, on one occasion, a well-known gentleman had a brick thrown at him through the window whilst engaged in his Ragged School duties. I found they had here a much larger room, a stronger staff of teachers, a greater number of children, and much better order than in the school I visited last. We were invited to take a class of girls. The one assigned to me I found very ignorant, most of them being unable to read, and nearly all totally anacquainted with such simple Bible stories as children are usually expected to know. Some of them wore a look which told plainly of their near and frequent acquaintance with want and wretchedness, though, as a rule, I did not think them so untamed as their brothers and sisters of Ancoats. Perhaps, however, this was owing to the larger room and more efficient organization. The bell was rung, and lessons were suspended. The energetic superintendent went round to every class, and, after bestowing a keen glance upon each individual, gave a ticket into two or three of the hands which were eagerly stretched out to receive these much-coveted bits of card. I am informed that they are tickets entitling the holders to a dinner, given from the Destitute Children's Dinner Society; the superintendent giving them to those whom he knows are in need of such assistance. A hymn was then sung, and a teacher commenced an address, whereupon we took our departure, our presence being required in another quarter.

My last visit was to a school which is always held up as a model—Heyrod Street Ragged School, in Ancoats. I found it without difficulty, and, upon entering, saw at once that the accounts I had heard of it were by no means exaggerated. A very large room was before me, densely crowded with young men, boys, and girls; and I should add that there is also a very good infants' school held in another room. At one end of the large room a stage or platform had been erected for the conductors of the school, but, being short of room, about 100 urchins had been brought on to it. At the opposite side of the building are four or five (what seemed to me) "private boxes," separated from the room by curtains. These are small class-rooms, filled with girls and their teachers, and reached by a staircase outside. The curtains being drawn aside, and the children in the class-rooms exposed to view, a hymn is sung, a prayer offered, and the very excellent, if rather boisterous, superintendent reads a portion of the Holy Scriptures to the whole school, explaining it at the same time. He is followed by another teacher, who gives them an address, which, although long, was listened to with an attention which would have done credit to an older and more fashionable audience, the speakers standing on the platform before-mentioned. The address being finished, and notices read, the children—I should think nearly 1,000 in number—sang very softly the well-known hymn, "I will arise, and go to my Father." So plaintively did they sing it that we found tears starting to our eyes, and for the time, utterly unconscious that we were listening to veritable Ragged School children. We were told of many wonderful things in connexion with the school. How that dirty ragged boys had grown up to be teachers, and how that the money deposited in the course of the year, at the Penny Bank, amounted to some hundreds of pounds, and the like. The school is in every way a credit to all concerned in it, but chiefly to its superintendent, who is well-known as a veteran Ragged School man.

Thus ended my visit to Ragged Schools. How much good has been, and is being, done, I think I need not remark, but I may say, to anyone wishing to make himself or herself useful, that Ragged Schools furnish a means of direct communication with the poorest of the poor and afford ample scope for those who wish to be imitators of Him of whom we read that "He went about doing good."—I remain, Sir, yours, R.

Manchester, April 13th, 1871.

VERDANT GREEN AND THE PROPHETIC BELL.

MR. Verdant Green writes to us complaining that he has been "done" by the tipsters both last week and on Tuesday last. We cannot say that we have much sympathy for Mr. Verdant Green, and, as we believe that the *Prophetic Bell*, the sporting print to which he refers, charges nothing for its public tips, we don't see that he has much to complain of. However, for the benefit of others who may feel inclined to follow Mr. Green's steps, we subjoin his letter.

Sir,—Last Tuesday week, being short of cash, and reduced to my last shilling, like Mr. Sothern as Squire Chuckles, I was obliged to have recourse to the assistance of my uncle, at Number One round the Corner. Having thus, by a familiar process known to the initiated, transformed a few articles which remained in my possession into current coin of the realm, I resolved to use my capital in some venture which would produce a speedy and certain return. I procured a copy of the *Prophetic Bell*, wherein I read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested the following remarks and prophecy regarding the City and Suburban Handicap, run on last Tuesday week:—"To sum up, I (the *P. B.*) can only remark that the market unquestionably indicates the victory of the Frailty Colt, while on the other hand, public form, the truest of all tests, speaks mostly in favour of King William and Paganini. Between the *two* named, I think the issue is certain to be left, and I associate the names of King William and Frailty Colt TO WIN, and with a strong recommendation that Paganini should be supported for a place, I shall very likely be anticipating the *fiat* of the judge." Very likely indeed! Very like a whale, I should say. Full of this advice, I rushed off to——well, to Blank Street, and after an infinity of trouble succeeded in getting the following full market price odds. I took three to one against Frailty colt to win, three to one against King William to win, and three to one against Paganini being in the first three. If either of the first two had won, and Paganini had obtained a place, calculating the investment in pounds, I should have won exactly £5 at the risk of losing £3. If neither of the two won, but the fiddler got a place, I should have secured £1 at the risk of £3, and if none of the three accomplished what the *Prophetic Bell* prophesied they would, I should lose exactly £3. This was exactly what I succeeded in doing. Jack Spigot at 20 to 1 was first, Revoke at 25 to 1 was second, and King William, which I backed to win according to the tip, was third. Paganini was nowhere.

You will naturally think that by this time I had got enough of the *Prophetic Bell*. By no means. Such is the infatuation of backers of horses, that I again had recourse to Number One round the Corner. This time, I parted with—that is to say, spouted—all my remaining availables. On the 2000 Guineas winning was reduced to a certainty. What said my prophetic guide, philosopher, and friend? "I consider Bothwell a really good place investment. King of the Forest, Sterling, and Bothwell, are the trio from which the winner will spring, and I shall return as my representatives, King of the Forest and Sterling," that is to say, he simply took the three first favourites as his tip, but placed them in wrong order. Looking on success as certain, I rushed to Blank Street, and "got on," as follows:—1 to 2½ against King of the Forest, 1 to 4 Sterling, and evens on Bothwell for a place. The result was that I again lost, and here I am.

I need scarcely say, Mr. Sphinx, that I have not yet revisited Number One round the Corner, but I have frequently caught myself exclaiming after the manner of Hamlet—O my *Prophetic Bell*—My Uncle!—Yours, in low water,

VERDANT GREEN.

Sponging House, Queer Street.

The Handsomest Luncheon Bar in Manchester is the Blackfriars-St., 3 Doors from St. Mary's Gate.
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Sole Lessee - - - W. S. BOOTH.
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Immense Reception nightly of
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FIRST APPEARANCE OF
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The great London Comique;
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SATURDAY EVENING, 29th APRIL, 1871.
COMPLIMENTARY TESTIMONIAL BENEFIT
TO MR. J. TENNANT, HALL KEEPER.

In acknowledgment of the high token of respect shown me by MR. MACCABE, he having set aside Saturday, 29th April, for a Complimentary Benefit for me, I have great pleasure in appealing to my numerous Friends to honour me with their Patronage.

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MR. FREDERIC MACCABE
Will introduce all his New Characters and Songs, and by special request appear in his great assumption of "Nicodemus Nobbs," in the Farce of
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The best Baritone Vocalist in the Profession, surnamed "The Santley of the Music Halls."

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All articles leaving my establishment will be cut by myself, and made up under my own superintendence.

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Rich SILK VELVET JACKETS at 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10 guineas,
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Our SEMOLINA is the staple food in France, Russia, Spain, Italy, &c., and will soon be that of England. It has obtained
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Is extremely nourishing and easily digested.

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will be makes delicious Puddings, Blancmange, Custards, and Pastry.

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